

## Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 IO-11

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R 190915Z JAN 76 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5162  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
COMIDEASTFOR  
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

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KUWAIT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IR

SUBJECT: PERSIAN GULF TERMINOLOGY ISSUE SIMMERS

REF: TEHRAN 0186

1. OMANI FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ZAWAWI ARRIVED JANUARY 14 FOR ONE-DAY VISIT TO EXPLAIN HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON PROPOSAL FOR "ARABIAN GULF NEWS AGENCY." HIS VISIT RESULTED IN OMAN'S EXONERATION FROM ANY COMPLICITY IN THIS ACTIVITY WHICH GOI SEES AS ANTI-IRANIAN. FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY TOLD PRESS JANUARY 17 OMAN HAD NOT TAKEN ANY PART IN DECISION TO ESTABLISH THIS NEWS AGENCY, DID NOT SIGN DOCUMENT PROPOSING IT, AND WAS NOT AWARE OF "ARABIAN GULF" DESIGNATION. KHALATBARY CLAIMED IT WAS KUWAIT WHICH HAD SUGGESTED THIS NAME.

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2. PRESS STORIES AND EDITORIALS IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPERS HAVE GENERALLY BLAMED KUWAIT FOR PROPOSING ARABIAN GULF NEWS AGENCY. PERSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS HAS ALSO IMPLICATED ABU DHABI, WHERE ORIGINAL MEETING TOOK PLACE. IRANIAN PRESS HAS ALSO PLAYED UP STATEMENTS BY TWO KUWAITI MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, KHALED AL-MASUD AND MOHAMMAD AL-RASHID, TO EFFECT THAT TERMINOLOGY WAS NONE OF IRAN'S BUSINESS. ONE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE MAY DESCRIBE ARABIAN GULF IN ANY MANNER WE SEE FIT."

3. CONTRARY TO QATARI ATTITUDE SUMMARIZED IN DOHA 0042, IRANIANS DO NOT BLAME IRAQ FOR PUSHING ISSUE. REZA GHASSEMI, HEAD OF MFA DIVISION HANDLING IRAQI AFFAIRS, TOLD EMBOFF JANUARY 18 THAT AS RESULT OF DISCUSSIONS HE HAD WITH IRAQI OFFICIALS WHILE ACCOMPANYING PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA ON RECENT TRIP TO BAGHDAD, HE ASSUMED IRAQI DELEGATE TO ABU DHABI MEETING ACTED ON HIS OWN IN AGREEING WITH PROPOSAL. MATTER OF NEWS AGENCY HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, AND IRAQI OFFICIALS ASSURED HIM THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF IRRITATING IRAN IN THIS FASHION. SINCE THEN, IRAQI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO APOLOGIZED TO IRANIAN EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD. IRAN-IRAQ RELATIONS ARE SO GOOD AT PRESENT, ACCORDING TO GHASSEMI, THAT IRAQIS WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN BY WAVING THIS RED FLAG BEFORE IRANIANS. HE SAID NEXT IRANIAN ACTIONS DEPEND ENTIRELY ON RESULTS OF JANUARY 20 MEETING IN BAHRAIN. HE EXPECTS THAT "EXPERTS" WHO ATTEND MEETING WILL PROBABLY DROP ENTIRE MATTER OR AT MOST TABLE IT FOR FURTHER STUDY. GOI WILL THEN DECIDE WHETHER TO RETURN ITS SEVEN AMBASSADORS TO GULF ARAB STATES TO THEIR POSTS.

4. HEAD OF MFA GULF AFFAIRS IZADI TOLD POLCOUNS THAT ALL SEVEN RETURNED GOI AMBASSADORS REPORTED TO FONMIN KHALATBARY THAT COUNTRIES TO WHICH THEY ARE ACCREDITED WERE ANXIOUS TO KEEP WARM RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND DID NOT WANT UNNECESSARY IRRITANTS BETWEEN THEM. GOI HOPES THIS IS BORNE OUT BY JANUARY 20 MEETING, IZADI SAID, BUT MFA OFFICIALS ARE DISCUSSING WHAT FURTHER STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN IF IT IS NOT.

5. AT SOCIAL OCCASION JANUARY 18, QATARI AMBASSADOR AL-ATYIAH AND SEVERAL OTHER ARAB DIPLOMATS GENERALLY CONFIRMED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WANT TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBABLY WOULD FIND SOME OTHER TITLE FOR NEWS AGENCY BUT WERE IRRITATED THAT GOI HAD MADE SUCH A PUBLIC FUSS OVER MATTER WITHOUT FIRST TRYING THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO FIND SATISFACTORY SOLUTION.  
HELMS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** THE PRESS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL RECALL  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976TEHRAN00507  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Line Count:** 112  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 TEHRAN 186  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PERSIAN GULF TERMINOLOGY ISSUE SIMMERS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, XF, IR, ARABIAN GULF NEWS AGENCY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006